

From: Mauvais Genie
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/2/02 12:00pm
Subject: Little red Linux-hood and the big bad Microsoft

For years now people have been railing against Microsoft for various reasons. Personally, my dislike began with Windows 3.11 over nothing important. See, I just found it to be a little patronizing. I wanted some little digital Toto to pull the curtain back and show me the truth. I could not understand why Microsoft was so insistent that they not tell me how it works. Here it is a decade or so later and its only gotten worse.

Enough of the Adjectives, here's the point. Microsoft, to their credit, managed to create an operating system that an intoxicated monkey could use. At the same time, an office suite and later a web browser, and all too soon...'.net' which from my perspective kinda like steering into the skid. As for me, there isn't anything I can do about it. If you create something geared for the dumbest person you know, before you know it everybody's using it. Everything is based on the lowest common denominator, and in this case its real low. Some one with absolutely no computer knowledge can use Windows and their expectations will be met because they don't have any. The demands they place on the operating systems and tasks running with in it are insignificant. And there are all too many people out there that don't even understand that there is a difference between the computer itself, the operating system, and the Internet. This speaks volumes about the way Microsoft blinds consumers and encourages ignorant users.

As I said, for years now people have been railing against Microsoft. I had my reasons and other people had reasons I couldn't understand. For some it was that Microsoft got too big too fast. Others had conspiracy theories that I found to be absurd. But through it all, there were those of us out there, forced to use it at jobs, forced to tolerate friends and family using Windows and having to deal with them. Deal with them in the non-descript phone calls of 'something' being wrong and being sent files that need to be opened with Microsoft programs or just deleted for lack of interest. For the most part, the fight against Microsoft's 'attitude' (I guess that's the best word) has been something akin to poking a polar bear with a really short stick. There have been small gains in the Open Source community, And keep in mind that any gain in any technology that competes with Microsoft to date is an impressive one which I support completely. But these gains I believe are exaggerated and have little impact on the market. I don't believe, given the current climate, that Mr. Gates is loosing any sleep over the Open Source community.

That said, the Open Source community needed a bigger stick. One I had hoped they'd found in the DoJ. I thought it was clear, that Microsoft had gone too far in too many ways. I mean really, even the stupidest monkey will only go so far out on the limb. And I'm not even really talking about from the standpoint of legality or technology which are not as readily visible. I'm

talking about 'corporate arrogance'. Its a kind of arrogance that comes from a company that knows they have you. Like Ma Bell before the breakup: "what are you going to do, go with another phone company??" Funny now isn't it. But think about what long distance prices would be at now. Think about the state cell phone technology would be at. Think about the fact that there would be no DSL or DHL connections. These advances seem largely the result of competition. As it stands now, I can get an Internet connection through a satellite dish and a cellphone from any number of companies willing to give me a phone just for signing up. I don't even need a home phone and the phone company knows it.

The phone company analogy serves no more than pointing out an example of the good fight gone right. Where very innovative people, given more opportunity explode onto the scene, pushing technology forward in some small part to fly in the face of their oppressors. I think the fight against Microsoft's 'policies' is a good fight. It warrants consideration. I also believe that the pending outcome seems to be more of a nod to Microsoft than any sort of penalty. All this talk of freedom is fine and has merit, but it really isn't my point. My point lies in the idea of doing what is fundamentally right in the ethical arena, to ensure that technology has the ability to move forward in the most efficient, beneficial way it can. If there is a matter of National Security here, it is in the idea of protecting the advancement of technology, not in protecting the advancement of Microsoft.

At this point, I would predict that a post-trial celebration party will be thrown by Microsoft's new spokesman....O.J. Simpson.

History will frown on this case's outcome as short-sighted.

Sincerely,
Jack Ware

P.S. This was typed on a Compaq Deskpro EN computer with a sticker on it that says "Designed For Microsoft" in Microsoft Word running on Microsoft Windows NT 4.0 Service Pack 6, where it was routed through a Microsoft Exchange Server on the way out of the LAN via a Microsoft Hotmail being fed into Outlook. I'm at work.

Permission to reprint in part or whole, granted to Dennis Powell and his ilk as he feels is appropriate. Its the least I can do.

Chat with friends online, try MSN Messenger: <http://messenger.msn.com>

CC: dennispowell@earthlink.net@inetgw

